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The Daily Mississippian

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Thursday, February 1, 2018

THE DAILY

Volume 106, No. 63

# MISSISSIPPIAN

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911 [Visit theDMonline.com](http://theDMonline.com) [@thedm\\_news](https://twitter.com/thedm_news)

## Asya Branch crowned Most Beautiful 2018



PHOTO BY: CHASE ROBERTS

Most Beautiful 2017 Blair Worts Smith crowns Asya Branch, Most Beautiful 2018 Tuesday night at the Ford Center.

JACQUELINE KNIRNSCHILD  
STAFF WRITER

A total of 69 women took to the Ford Center stage last night to compete in the Parade of Beauties. Judges selected sophomore broadcast journalism major Asya Branch as “Most Beautiful 2018.”

Branch is from Booneville and said she enjoys singing, dancing and traveling.

She said she was in awe after her win and struggled to form words.

“I think Most Beautiful is truly about what’s inside, as well as what’s outside and how you come across on stage and in an interview and everything,” Branch said.

Branch’s boyfriend, sister and friends were in the audience cheering her on. Freshman business administration major Bryan Johnson said he and Branch have known each other since middle school and have been dating for two years.

“I knew she was going to win,” Johnson said. “I’m super excited for her to compete for Miss Mississippi – she’s turned me into a pageant boyfriend.”

Branch’s friend Shauna

Dickey said she was losing her voice from screaming so loudly during the pageant.

“She’s gorgeous inside and out and presents herself so well,” Dickey said. “I’m so proud of her.”

Juwan McGee, Branch’s older sister, said she followed her since the beginning of her journey competing in beauty pageants and couldn’t be more proud of her win.

Contestants in the 67th annual Parade of Beauties, hosted by the Student Activities Association, were interviewed privately before the pageant by a panel of four judges. The interviews counted as 10 percent of their total scores.

The evening gown competition – which evaluated stage presence, poise, physical fitness, personality and overall beauty – counted for the other 90 percent.

Contestants were escorted by members of Ole Miss ROTC. There was a tie for the top 10 finalists, bringing the total to a top 11 out of the 69 contestants.

The beauty contest was emceed by Miss University 2018, Charley Ann Nix, and Most Beautiful 2017, Blair Worts Smith.

Branch will continue on to compete in Miss Mississippi.

## ‘We need to tell the full story’:

## University’s Black History Month events begin today

BRIANA FLOREZ  
STAFF WRITER

The university’s Black History Month events begin at 4 p.m. today with an opening ceremony in Fulton Chapel and will continue throughout the month with film screenings, a legacy walk honoring James Meredith, a session on how to utilize library resources to explore African-American history and much more.

Hosted by the Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement (CICCE) and the Black History Month Planning

Committee, the opening ceremony will include selections from the UM Gospel Choir and a keynote address from assistant professor of sociology Bryan Foster.

The “Lift Every Voice Award” will also be presented at the ceremony. This award honors a person, group or entity that has actively improved relations on campus, specifically targeting areas such as diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion.

CICCE director Shawnboda Mead said preparation for Black History Month began in September. The CICCE plans the opening celebration and

keynote address but openly invites other groups to collaborate on other events throughout the month.

“We invite several student organizations, academic and student affairs departments and other community groups to attend the first Black History Month planning meeting in September,” Mead said. “Our goal is to offer a comprehensive calendar of events that foster reflection, dialogue and engagement for the entire campus community.”

National Poetry Slam Champion and Individual World Poetry Slam finalist Clint Smith will deliver the

keynote address in Fulton Chapel on Feb. 26. Smith does more than just poetry – he is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship recipient interested in mass incarceration, sociology of race and the history of U.S. inequality. He has given two TED talks, which have been viewed more than 5 million times. He is also a writer, teacher and doctoral candidate at Harvard University.

The fifth annual Black History Month Gala will take place at 6 p.m. Feb. 9 in the Gertrude C. Ford Center. The gala was first created by the Black Student Union execu-

tive board, which felt it was necessary to commemorate those African Americans who had created a more diverse and inclusive atmosphere but were going unrecognized.

Black Student Union President Nekkita Beans said that, since 2014, the gala has celebrated African-American achievement of progress on campus.

“We are proud to continue to perpetuate this initiative and are excited to fellowship with current members, past BSU students, as well as faculty and staff,” Beans said.



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GUEST COLUMN

# The state of our union is strong again



WRIGHT RICKETTS  
GUEST COLUMNIST

President Donald Trump delivered his first State of the Union address late Tuesday night on Capitol Hill. The president used his nearly 90-minute speech to celebrate his administration's legislative achievements of 2017 and went on to detail an ambitious outline for further progress in 2018.

Soon after taking the podium, the president proclaimed that "the state of our union is strong" and that a "new tide

of optimism" had swept over our nation.

Objectively speaking, it is hard to argue with his assertion. Not since the 1980s have Americans seen this degree of economic prosperity. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. economy has created more than 2.4 million new jobs, the stock market has gained \$6.9 trillion in value and small business confidence is at a historic high.

Even more impressively, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 196,000 new manufacturing jobs in 2017, compared to a net loss of 16,000 the year before. Unemployment rates currently sit at a 45-year low, and African-American and Latino unemployment rates have reached their lowest points in U.S. history.

Last year was, indeed, historic for the Trump administration and, consequently, for our country. President Trump's defining accomplish-

ment of the year was signing into law the Tax Cuts and Job Act, the most significant reform of the federal tax code in nearly 37 years. The bill reduces taxes for more than 80 percent of Americans while slashing the corporate tax rate from 35 to 21 percent, which has already resulted in more than 3 million American workers receiving bonuses.

Another substantial victory for President Trump and the Republican party was the nomination and subsequent Senate confirmation of Justice Neil Gorsuch, a protégé of the late Antonin Scalia, to the U.S. Supreme Court. Gorsuch, known for his staunch advocacy for judicial originalism, essentially guarantees a conservative-controlled court for decades to come.

The president has also nominated 12 federal appellate judges – a presidential record for a single year.

In addition, illegal crossings over our southern border

are at a 46-year low, more than 1,500 financial regulations have been slashed and ISIS-controlled territory has been decimated.

While the mainstream media has infatuated itself with trivial tweets and virtue signaling, President Trump and the GOP have been at work implementing their agenda and reshaping our country for decades to come.

President Trump has successfully delivered on a vast number of his campaign promises, much to the despair of the Democratic party. Compared to just one year ago, the United States is wealthier, safer and more prosperous.

American optimism is reaching new heights, and international leadership has been restored. Once again, the state of our union is strong.

*Wright Ricketts is a junior banking and finance major from Memphis.*

THE DAILY  
MISSISSIPPIAN

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Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel. Third-party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

Letters should include phone and email contact information so that editors can verify authenticity. Letters from students should include grade classification and major; letters from faculty and staff should include title and the college, school or department where the person is employed.



MISSISSIPPI  
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MEMBER NEWSPAPER



**BHM**  
*continued from page 1*

Men of Excellence, an organization that supports minority males on campus, has hosted the “Continuing the Legacy Walk” since 2015. The walk serves to honor James Meredith, who in 1962 became the first African American to attend Ole Miss. This year’s walk will take place at noon Feb. 7 in the Lyceum Circle.

Norris “EJ” Edney III, National Pan-Hellenic Council coordinator of Greek affairs,

said the walk reminds the community of the opposition those in the African-American community faced in 1962.

“Commemorating the integration of the University of Mississippi is important because of the continued disparities in educational access and outcomes that minority students experience,” Edney said. “It (the walk) is meant to remind us that there is still work to do and progress to make for many marginalized groups on campus. It is important to remember the inequities of our past and

present.”

J.D. Williams Library will host an event Feb. 21 to make students aware of free online resources accessible through the library. These tools are particularly helpful for students in African-American studies classes or those who want to learn more about African-American history.

The library’s archives and special collections are celebrated, and they include all of James Meredith’s papers; however, many students don’t realize they are so recognized, according to Amy Gibson, African-

American studies librarian.

Gibson said there is a benefit to understanding all of America’s history and a need for Americans to empathize about the painful part of their country’s past. She also acknowledged that it takes a long time to deal with this painful history, especially considering African Americans had to be integrated through the use of force.

Becca Walton, associate director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, said the study of African-American his-

tory must be made a priority throughout the year, not just during one month.

“We walk on ground that still bears evidence of slavery and resistance to segregation. We need to tell the full story of how this legacy of inequality and violence affects the experience of students, faculty and staff,” Walton said. “There isn’t a history of the University of Mississippi without black history.”



# Panel explores history of slavery on campus

**TERRENCE JOHNSON**  
STAFF WRITER

The UM Slavery Research Group and the Robert C. Khayat Law Center teamed up Wednesday to sponsor the Martin Luther King Day Commemoration Panel at the university’s law school.

The panel was made up of four faculty members: history professor Anne Twitty, sociology professor Jeffrey Jackson, English professor Jennie Lightweis-Goff and history professor Marc H. Lerner and connected various areas of research in Oxford-Lafayette County and beyond to slavery on campus.

The UM Slavery Research Group began in 2014 and is currently made up of faculty and staff working across disciplines to learn more about the history of slavery and enslaved people in Oxford and on campus.

Jackson serves as a co-chair of UMSRG and said many “institutions were created in support of slavery ... and were founded largely on the basic profits of slavery”.

During the construction of the original 10 buildings that made up the University of Mississippi, enslaved people were rented by the university from local slave owners to dig wells, build dwellings and provide services such as carpentry and

masonry to the university.

Three of those buildings remain, including the Lyceum.

“George Hall, Lamar Hall, Barnard Observatory, these are all prominent men in our campus’ history, but they were also slaveholders,” Jackson said.

Accounts of these enslaved people can be found in faculty minutes and Board of Trustees minutes. There are particular stories, like one of an enslaved woman named Jane who was raped and beaten on campus, that also give light to the importance of the people who built the university.

“To be a slave is to be a stranger,” Lightweis-Goff said.

Documentation and trac-

es of most of those enslaved people are not completely intact. There are photographs without names, and ledgers with only first names or nicknames.

“The university also maintained an enslaved labor force,” Jackson said. “While their names were rarely recorded in historical documents, we do know that George, Jane, Henry, John, Squash, Moses, Will and Nathan were among those who performed the work of farming and maintaining the buildings and stables.”

The first university to begin researching institutional enslavement on a college campus was Brown University.

“Brown University, after all, largely began as an

influential institution as a result of the support that it received from the Brown family, who, by and large, had made their fortune off the trans-Atlantic slave trade,” Twitty said.

Since then, several universities have begun to do the work associated with rediscovering the lives of enslaved people on university campuses.

“The impact of Brown University for the rest of us undertaking such work has been absolutely enormous,” Twitty said.

Currently, a national organization known as Universities Studying Slavery (USS) allows universities to work together to address both historical and contemporary issues dealing with race and inequality in

higher education.

Currently, there are only 34 institutions that are members of the USS. The groups include Ivy League institutions, private universities and colleges, as well as public, state-funded institutions.

The University of Mississippi is the only institution in the state and the only institution in the Southeastern Conference that is part of the organization.

The university will unveil six plaques March 2 to contextualize several university buildings and spaces on campus and will also host other events throughout the semester to showcase the work of the UM Slavery Research Group.

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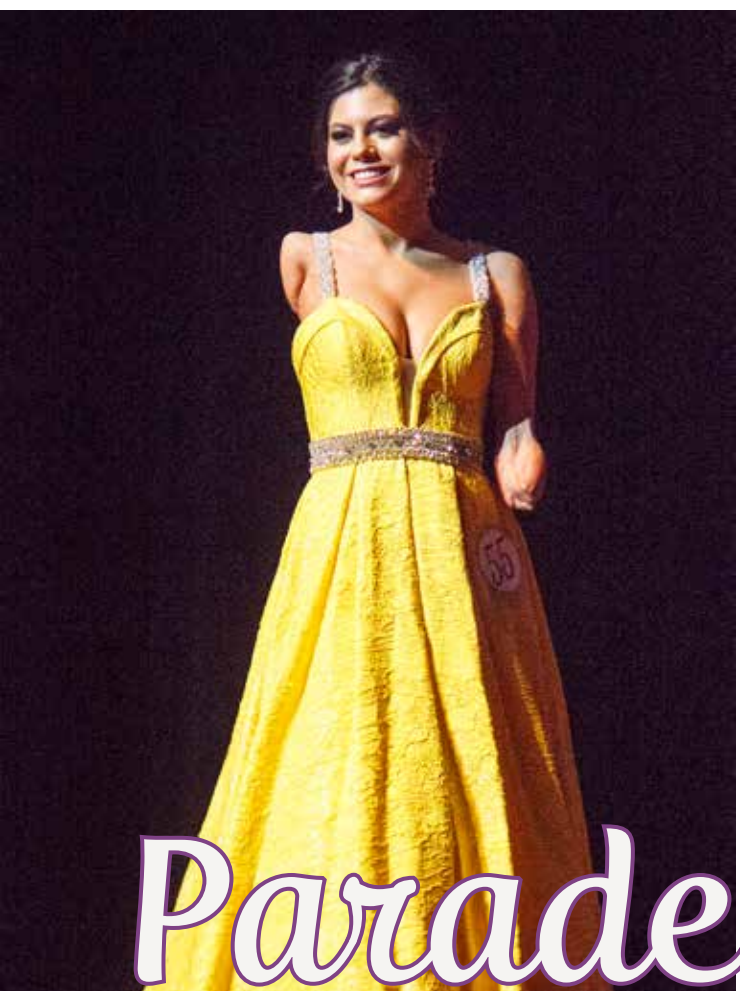
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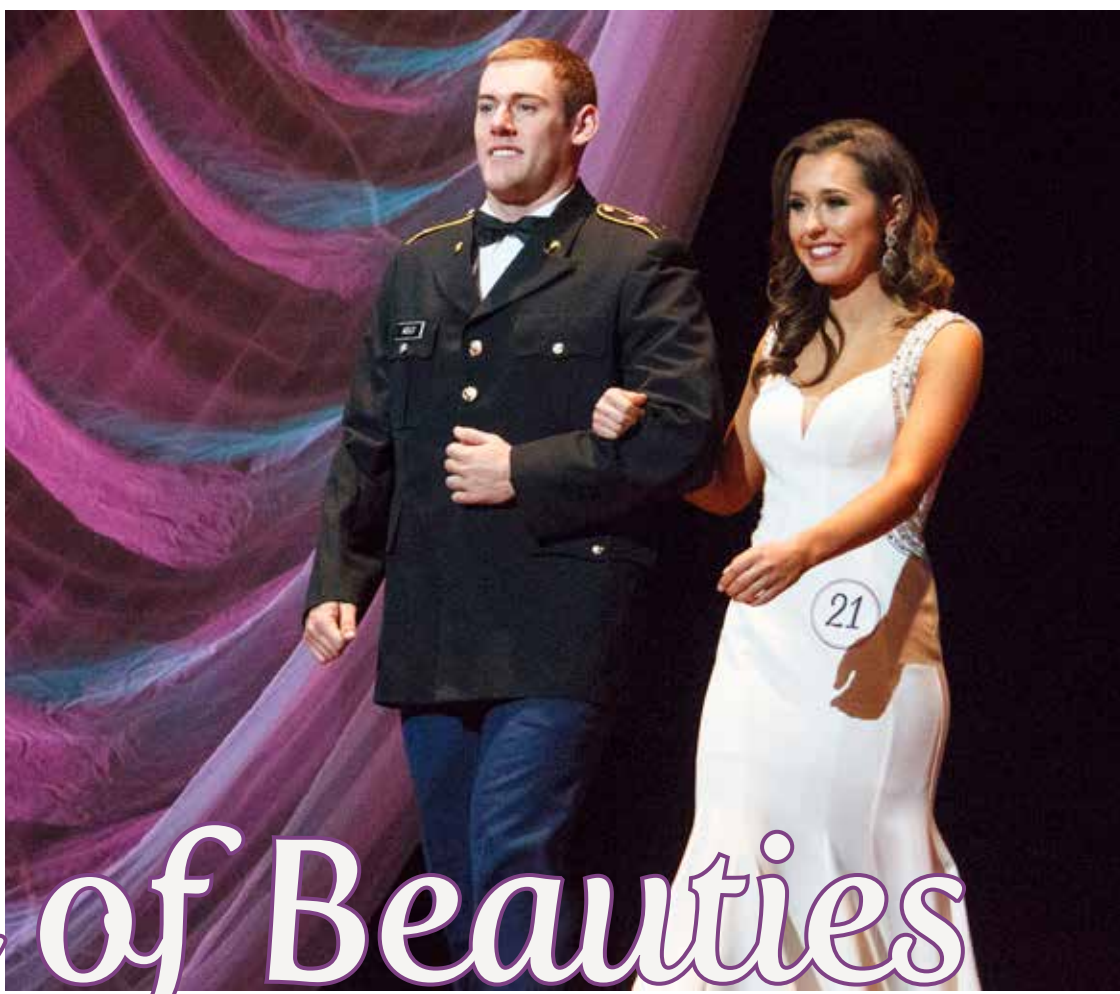
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Madysen Acey



Emily Slohr

# Parade of Beauties



Gabiella Elnicki



Hannah Perrigin



Brittney Jackson



Madison McCay



# PODCASTS of the week

ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA

DESIGN EDITOR

Today is the first day of February, which is Black History Month, so this week's podcast is honoring black voices and the contributions and achievements black people have made to podcasting and public radio. The following podcasts discuss everything from music and culture of the African diaspora to the American justice system. So grab some headphones and give them a listen.

## ANOTHER ROUND



PHOTO COURTESY: BUZZFEED

"Another Round," hosted by Heben Nigatu and Tracy Clayton, is all about topics that are vital, covering everything from race and gender to pop culture. On the show, which is produced by BuzzFeed, the two friends and their occasional guests take on matters that are often not brought up in conversation. The episode that drew me to the show is titled "Was That a Microaggression Or Just Tuesday?" Both hosts and guest Audie

Cornish, who is the host of NPR's "All Things Considered," discuss not only microaggressions but also the "unbearable whiteness of white radio." The discussion covers what it means to be both black and professional, as well as the stereotypes people of color are surrounded by in public radio. Previous guests on the podcast have been Hillary Clinton and journalist and author Ta-Nehisi Coates. The show is insightful and hysterical in all the right places, but most importantly, it's relatable.

## STATE OF THE RE:UNION



PHOTO COURTESY: PRX.ORG

Available on Soundcloud or its website, "State of the Re:Union" is hosted by performance artist and playwright Al Letson. It is both a podcast and public radio show distributed by Public Radio Exchange and NPR that explores cities around the U.S. – both small and big. Letson describes the show as "an unlikely idea that came from an unlikely show."

He grew up a black boy who wanted to extend his experiences to the country as a whole. Throughout his upbringing he became disconnected from America, uneasy with the symbol of slavery and often seeing the American flag as the Confederate flag. The show chronicles America from every aspect, discussing aspects that are often overlooked, from the American justice system to a gay black civil rights leader trying to make an impact. With this show and his experiences, Letson hopes to find his place in America while documenting different voices.

## AFROPOP WORLDWIDE



PHOTO COURTESY: PUBLICBROADCASTING.NET

Launched in 1988, "Afropop Worldwide" has continued to expand and includes a wide range of music and cultures from the African diaspora and is considered to be one of the most internationally syndicated weekly radio shows. Hosted by Georges Collinet, the show highlights stories from music capitals in Latin America and Africa. Collinet offers a history lesson through each episode for listeners, talking about subjects as various as the Mugabe regime

in Zimbabwe, the first black-owned record label in the U.S. and Haiti's fight for copyright. The weekly radio show brings cultures and countries together through Collinet's power of storytelling. A personal favorite is "The Mugabe Years," which centers around Zimbabwe's most significant musician, Thomas Mapfumo, and his post-independence songs that, though considered controversial, shaped the country and destabilized apartheid programs upheld by the African regime. The song mentioned in the show, "Corruption," focuses on former President Mugabe and his long financial scandal that led to the country's hyperinflated economy. "Afropop Worldwide" not only shares the stories of the African diaspora but also combines history, music and culture.

## THE BLACK GUY WHO TIPS



PHOTO COURTESY: STITCHER

This show offers a more comedic perspective on things. Rod and Karen, a married couple, give listeners wisdom and unpredictable humor, always keeping true to their motto, "nothing's wrong if it's funny." They delve into serious issues about ongoing situations, giving their own commentary, which will always knock you off your feet. Covering topics such as the "#MeToo" movement, an Air Force sergeant's racist rant and DACA, the couple's interesting outlook leaves listeners pondering after each episode.

Rod and Karen have been featured on Huffington Post, and the show has constantly been ranked as the No. 1 comedy podcast on Podomatic. In a more recent episode, "Black Lightning so Lit" the two discuss the opioid crisis, a bridge in Colombia falling and relating that to America's failing infrastructure, which has roads, according to Karen, that have not been maintained in years, and America's drinking problem. The two are a great team, and Rod's infectious laugh and their combined humor will make you tear up for all the right reasons.

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\*All UM semester rules apply.

# Freshmen help fuel success for No. 8 Ole Miss rifle

SARAH HENDERSON  
CONTRIBUTOR

The No. 8 Ole Miss rifle team has consistently competed at the top of its game this season. Defeating North Carolina State, Akron, Army, Nebraska and most recently, No. 13 Navy, the women of the rifle team proudly boast a 5-2 Great American Rifle Conference record with the team's only GARC losses coming against No. 1 West Virginia and No. 3 Kentucky.

The onset of the team's success began in 2016 with the hiring of head coach Marsha Beasley. Arriving after a hiatus from the sport, Beasley advertised an impressive resume of eight national NCAA Rifle championships at West Virginia and involvement with the Atlanta Olympics. Ole Miss Athletics

hoped to skyrocket the success of the rifle team with Beasley's expertise and eventually win a national championship of its own. While much of the season still remains, Beasley and her team have done an exceptional job so far.

"This season has been an indication of how well the program is doing," Beasley said. "We have broken three school records so far and look to be breaking more."

The team records broken include a score of 4667 against Ohio State University, 4669 against Nebraska and the most recent record of 4687 against Alaska-Fairbanks. The scoring record was broken all three times within a week of each other, proving that Ole Miss rifle is still gaining momentum.

While having talented athletes is a large component of

their current success, Beasley attributes most of the program's wins to an atmosphere of team unity and positive energy.

"The team, as a whole, has done well this season," Beasley said. "Everyone has been stepping up and shooting their own personal bests. It has really been a team effort."

Senior member Kristyn Trump said she also believes in the power of a tight-knit team, preaching the importance of accountability amongst one another.

"The most exciting part about this rifle season is our team," Trump said. "We have been working hard to build a positive team atmosphere and keep each other accountable."

Playing a large factor in the team's unity is the surprising number of freshmen who comprise this year's team. Typically, upperclassmen contribute most of the counted scores in competition, but this year is different, as three of the six freshmen on the roster have stepped up and have had their scores counted regularly.

"Bringing in these freshmen has changed the team's culture," Beasley said. "Three of our top four counted scores have come from freshmen in competition this season, which is really something new."

The addition of assistant coach Jean-Pierre Lucas has also played a role in the team's success. Lucas' positivity allows all of the team members to push themselves to perform at their best, which is crucial when it comes time for competition. Beasley said the assistant



FILE PHOTO: MARLEE CRAWFORD

The Ole Miss rifle range uses an electronic scoring system. After the marksmen aim at the electronic targets at the end of the range, the shot taken is shown on the screen beside them.

coach's energy is contagious and she sees the team's reaction to his excitement translated in its scores.

Sophia Cuozzo, one of this season's standout freshmen, recently shot her highest career aggregate score of 1158 against Alaska-Fairbanks. Cuozzo has participated in rifle since the age of 12 but said she has enjoyed taking her hobby to the collegiate level and contributing to the success of a record-breaking team.

"A personal goal for me is to prove that I have a place in college athletics and be confident that all of the hard work I have put into my sport will shine through in the years to come,"

Cuozzo said.

With the way that the early season has unfolded, the Ole Miss rifle team is hungry for a national championship win. Although the team is optimistic of winning it all, Beasley said she would be proud of her team qualifying in the top 18 for NCAA teams.

"We obviously want to win, but we will continue to do the best that we can," Beasley said. "The season has gone great thus far, but we still have a long way to go."

Ole Miss will compete again on Feb. 11 against Memphis. The competition will be held at 9 a.m. in Oxford.

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14 Actress MacDowell  
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16 Buck follower  
17 Abounds  
18 Airline since 1948  
19 Bog down  
20 Scot's cap  
21 Small pieces  
24 Shah, e.g.  
26 Bridal paths  
27 \_\_\_ the ramparts...  
28 Puccini classic  
30 Final Four org.  
33 Attack with severe criticism  
35 Univ. aides  
38 Like a mosquito bite  
40 "Exodus" role  
41 Like non-oyster months  
43 Gallery display  
44 Erase  
47 \_\_\_ instant  
48 Layers  
49 Apt. divisions  
51 Atelier items  
54 Normally

58 Leaping insect  
61 Abu Dhabi's fed.  
62 Basic unit of heredity  
63 Langston Hughes poem  
64 Italian lady  
66 Work without \_\_\_  
67 Person, place, or thing  
68 Build  
69 \_\_\_ avis  
70 "\_\_\_ grip!"  
71 Thorny flowers

DOWN

1 Singer LaBelle  
2 Lend \_\_\_ (listen)  
3 Excess fluid in an organ  
4 Intention  
5 Monster's nickname  
6 \_\_\_ the hole  
7 Young male horse  
8 Jacob's first wife  
9 Let loose  
10 San Diego suburb  
11 Corbeled bay window  
12 TV producer Michaels  
13 Silt deposit  
22 Milky Way maker  
23 Kitchen gadget  
25 Ark builder

SOLUTION TO 1.31.2018 PUZZLE

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LENO ORION YSER

28 Gogo's "\_\_\_ Bulba"  
29 Ear-related  
30 Actress Vardalos  
31 Geom. point  
32 Perform  
34 Latte spot  
35 Sawbuck  
36 Al Jolson's real first name  
37 Nine-digit ID  
39 Shouts  
42 Actress Bonet  
45 Angling  
46 Scottish Gaelic

48 Previous monetary unit of Spain  
50 Unlawful killing  
51 Actress Samantha  
52 Sports area  
53 Less bananas  
54 Once \_\_\_ time...  
55 Crescents  
56 Knight's weapon  
57 "The Wild Swans at Coale" poet  
59 Plains native  
60 Sulk  
65 Acapulco gold

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			4				8	
5							3	
	8		2				6	
			1			5	2	
		7	6		9	4		
	9	2			3			
	6				7		4	
	2							8
	7				2			

HOW TO PLAY

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

CHALLENGING

1	6	9	2	5	3	8	7	4
8	5	7	4	9	6	1	2	3
2	4	3	7	1	8	5	9	6
9	7	8	3	4	5	2	6	1
3	1	4	6	2	9	7	5	8
6	2	5	8	7	1	3	4	9
5	9	6	1	3	2	4	8	7
4	3	2	9	8	7	6	1	5
7	8	1	5	6	4	9	3	2



# Women's basketball top 16 reveal set for tonight

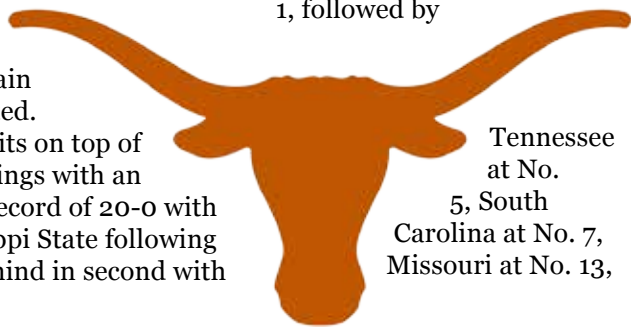
**MAGGIE CROUCH**  
STAFF WRITER

The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee will reveal another round of its top 16 teams in the country Thursday night on ESPN, during halftime of the game between No. 1 UConn and No. 7 South Carolina.

During the showcase in Columbia, South Carolina, the committee will not only unveil the nation's top-ranked 16 teams but also will release the top four teams in each region at 7 p.m. EST Thursday night. Of the teams ranked by the committee in the top 16 on Jan. 18, only two remain undefeated. UConn sits on top of the rankings with an overall record of 20-0 with Mississippi State following close behind in second with



a 22-0 record. UConn has proved itself as a solid team year in and year out and has held AP's top spot since this year's preseason rankings came out. The second-place spot has been a battle between Texas, Notre Dame and Louisville, with Mississippi State ultimately landing at No. 2 heading into Week 14. Although Ole Miss is not ranked in either the top 16 committee ranking or the AP top 25, half of the SEC is represented in the first NCAA Committee top 16 with Mississippi State leading the pack at No. 1, followed by



Tennessee at No. 5, South Carolina at No. 7, Missouri at No. 13,

Texas A&M at No. 14 and Georgia bringing up the rear of ranked SEC teams at No. 16.

The Rebels have played more than half of these teams this season, having faced South Carolina, Missouri, Mississippi State and Tennessee, but each game ended in defeat for Ole Miss. Although the outcomes weren't what the Rebels had hoped for, the team improved in the two weeks between its pair of matchups against second-ranked Mississippi State. The Rebels held the Bulldogs to a 20-point victory in the second matchup, an 11-point increase over the 31-point victory in favor of the Bulldogs the first time the two teams met in January.

With eight games remaining this season, the Rebels will take on the rest of the



top 16 SEC teams from the first reveal, which includes Texas A&M on the road and a home/away series with Georgia.

Another high-profile game prior to Thursday night's reveal will take place between the Texas A&M Aggies and the Tennessee Volunteers in a crucial SEC matchup in Knoxville, Tennessee. Though this ranking reveal will be a telling sign for where each team stands, it doesn't mean any team should be counted out for the rest of the season. With the third and final Thursday Night Showcase set for Feb. 19, numerous key games are still to be played, and teams will once again be evaluated and identified, with potential

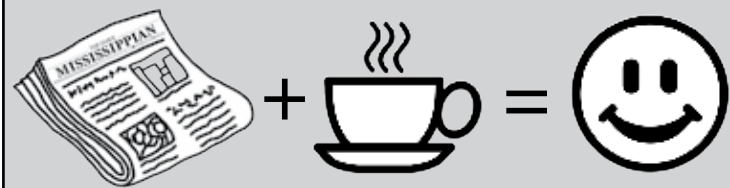


regional assignments for all 16 teams more than plausible.

However, these top 16 announcements will have no bearing on the final 64-team field for the 2018 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship, and the official bracket will be announced during the Selection Special at 7 p.m. EST on Monday, March 12, on ESPN.



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# Ole Miss women's basketball hosts Vanderbilt

**CAROLINE MCCRAY**  
STAFF WRITER

The Vanderbilt Commodores women's basketball team will travel to Oxford on Thursday to take on the Ole Miss Rebels for the first time since 2016.

This game will mark the 49th meeting in the two teams' all-time series, which Vanderbilt leads 31-16. The last time the Commodores played in Oxford was Jan. 3, 2016, when the Rebels took home a close win with a final score of 55-52. Vanderbilt has not won in Oxford since the 2013-14 season and totals only eight victories in Oxford.

Coming into Thursday, both Ole Miss and Vanderbilt are trying to bounce back from tough losses at home. The Rebels lost 69-49 to Mississippi State on Sunday, while the Commodores fell to Texas A&M 91-67. Both teams have had slow starts to conference play and currently hold a 1-7 record. Vanderbilt's sole conference win was against Kentucky, and the Rebels' came against Florida.

However, there is no lack of talent between these two teams. Vanderbilt had three players score in the double digits during Sunday's game against the Aggies. Chelsie Hall led the team with 16 points, followed by Kayla Overbeck with 14 and Christa Reed with 13. Reed also led the team defensively with six rebounds.

Hall is having a remark-

able freshman season for the Commodores. She is averaging 13.1 points per game and the freshman guard has already scored double figures in 15 games this season.

On the other end of the court, Ole Miss junior Madinah Muhammad continues to lead the Rebels offensively. The 5-foot-8 guard from Chicago is ranked No. 6 in the SEC for points scored per game with an average of 17.8. In addition, Muhammad is also ranked second in the SEC, averaging 2.5 three-pointers per game and having made more than 50 three-point shots this season.

Barely trailing Muhammad is her teammate and fellow guard Alissa Alston. Alston currently averages 14.4 points per game and is ranked No. 7 in the SEC for most assists this season with 85. Alston scored a career high of 27 points in the game against South Alabama earlier this season and will be critical for the Rebels' success against Vanderbilt.

Getting an early lead against the Commodores will be crucial for the Rebels on Thursday. Ole Miss is 10-1 this season when it is winning at halftime. The only game Ole Miss lost while winning at the half was against Florida on Jan. 21, who it beat later in the year. The Rebels were up 29-26 at half but fell just short and lost 61-60 to the Gators.

Muhammad currently has scored 964 points in her basketball career at



PHOTO BY: BILLY SCHUERMAN

Guard Chyna Nixon dribbles around a Mississippi State defender during a game earlier this week. The Bulldogs won 69-49 on Sunday.

Ole Miss – not far from reaching the coveted 1,000 point-mark, which could come with a fantastic outing Thursday. She would be the 29th Rebel to ever reach 1,000 points.

Another important factor for Ole Miss is freshman Promise Taylor, who has

58 blocks this season. The three-time SEC Freshman of the Week is on track to beat the school record for most blocks in a single season, surpassing Shawn Goff, who set the current record during the 2007-08 season with 67 blocks.

A win Thursday night will

be the first win for the Rebels since the game against Florida on Feb. 7 and would give the team a much-needed confidence boost. Tip off for the game is scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday at The Pavilion, and the game will be streamed live on SEC Network+.

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